

The main theme running through this volume is that coherence is a *mental phenomenon* rather than a property of the spoken or written text, or of the social situation. Coherence emerges during speech production and comprehension, allowing the speech receiver to form roughly the same representation as the speech producer had in mind. In producing and comprehending a text, be it spoken or written, the interlocutors *collaborate* towards coherence. They *negotiate* for a common ground of shared topicality, reference and thematic structure — similar mental representation of the text. In conversation, the negotiation takes place between present participants. In written or oral narrative, the negotiation takes place in the mind of the text producer, between the text producer and his/her mental representation of the mind of the absent or inactive interlocutor. The cognitive mechanisms that underlie face-to-face communication thus continue to shape text production and comprehension in non-interactive contexts.

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